

**Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District  
Minutes from December 1st, 2016 District Board Meeting**

Present: Directors: Brian Nakamura, Larry Martin, Cindy Collins, and Rick Ragan

Associate Directors: Chuck Gehling

District and NRCS Staff: Jordan Kim, Kris Schaedel, Megan Saunders, Cindy Thieman, Carly Heron (NRCS)

Visitors: Steve Castagnoli (OSU Extension) and Theresa DeBardelaben (ODA)

The group introduced themselves for Theresa's benefit.

Steve reported that the core pesticide training happened on November 9<sup>th</sup>. A representative from Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) attended this training to present information on the new worker protection standards as well as on new training requirements. He has been busy managing the Experiment Station and planning for the upcoming spring. The train-the-trainer workshop will be held January 19<sup>th</sup> and is already full. A handler training with Washington Department of Agriculture will be on January 27<sup>th</sup>, the Mid-Columbia Cherry Day in The Dalles will be held on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Winter Horticultural meeting will be held on February 10<sup>th</sup>, and the Spanish Irrigation Water Management training will be held later in the winter.

**Consent agenda** – Rick moved and Cindy seconded:

- To approve the minutes of November 3<sup>rd</sup> as written.
- To accept the November 2016 Profit & Loss statements and the November 30, 2016 Balance Sheet as distributed. As of November 30<sup>th</sup> the balance in the bank accounts (including the CD) was \$109,565.73. Income of \$47,847.57 included: \$12,725.00 from quarterly ODA Support, \$288 from the plant sale, \$6,693.03 from CTWS for rock for the Odell Dam removal project, \$4,817.51 from OWRD for the Laurance Lake Expansion Study, \$12,741.29 from EcoTrust for the 2013 WWRI USFS West Fork project, and \$0.19 in interest income.
- Expenses were those authorized at the November meeting.
- To approve payment of bills #4587-4605, and the bank transfers to the Internal Revenue Service, Oregon Dept. of Revenue, Vanguard, and Wells Fargo as follows:

Bills to be Paid		December 1, 2016	
Check No.	Payee	Account	Amount
1012	Void		
1013	Void		
1014	OWEB	partial refund of advance for Odell dam removal	\$7,175.54
4587	Anne Saxby	Financial Manager wages	\$1,035.95
4588	Jordan Kim	District Manager wages	\$2,080.51
4589	Megan Saunders	Watershed Project Manager wages	\$2,379.66
4590	Kris Schaedel	Conservation Technician wages	\$2,071.26
4591	Cindy Thieman	Watershed Coordinator wages	\$3,020.54
4592	MCAREC	office rent	\$975.00
ET	Internal Revenue Service	federal employment taxes	\$3,029.97
ET	OR Dept. of Revenue	state employment taxes	\$865.26
4593	Mid-Columbia Janitorial	office cleaning	\$69.50
4594	Century Link	Office phone service	\$153.70
4595	VOID		
4596	Jordan Kim	misc. expenses reimbursement	\$72.58
4597	Megan Saunders	misc. expenses reimbursement	\$95.19
4598	Cindy Thieman	misc. expenses reimbursement	\$209.73
ET	Vanguard	SIMPLE IRA	\$1,054.89
ET	Wells Fargo Vendor Services	copier lease	\$73.31
4599	Craig Office Supply	copies	\$12.59

4600	US Bank	annual report printing, conf. lodging, stamps	\$975.81
4601	DEQ	PSP - M17-0068	\$590.82
4602	MFID	Laurance Lake expansion study inv. 16-484	\$4,317.51
4603	River Design Group	Odell dam removal inv.7419,7146,7170,7194	\$6,289.64
4604	Adams Barkdust	Odell dam removal project	\$500.00
4605	Anne Saxby	misc. expenses reimbursement	\$50.24
		Total	\$37,099.20

The motion passed unanimously. Expenses this month included a bill from DEQ for PSP, MFID for the Laurance Lake Expansion Study, and costs for printing and postage the annual report. Rick asked why River Design Group (RDG) had bills coming in after the Odell dam project has been completed. Cindy T. explained that RDG waited to bill final totals for both the design contract and the restoration contract until the project was completed. Jordan explained the district needed to return some of the advance received for the Odell project to OWEB. The amount reported at the last board meeting changed slightly due to a miscalculation when reconciling all the bills being charged to the various project funders. So Brian signed a new check for the correct amount. Jordan noted that some of the values on the Profit & Loss statement are handwritten because there were some problems with QuickBooks that couldn't be resolved in time for the board meeting. Cindy C. offered to help troubleshoot the problem.

**Old Business** – Theresa passed out maps of the **Strategic Implementation Area (SIA)**. Jordan summarized the SIA process for the group. She explained that ODA completed both the aerial and ground-truthing part of the assessment. They surveyed the entire 6<sup>th</sup> field HUC containing the Odell Creek watershed. Theresa explained that within the 6<sup>th</sup> field HUC they identified properties with 2 significant, 12 moderate, and 25 low concerns. In just the Odell Creek watershed they found properties with 2 significant, 10 moderate, and 21 low concerns. Jordan had expressed staff concerns with capacity if we took on the entire 6<sup>th</sup> field HUC. However, given that there would only be 6 additional properties, it does not seem like a significantly different work load. Jordan also explained that when the district initially signed on to do the SIA there was a specific pool of money to be used for projects in the SIA. That money may not be available in the next biennium. There are still approximately \$350,000 in grant funds left to be allocated by June 2017 that we could apply for in May for projects in the Odell SIA. Rick asked what kind of land practices ODA identified as a problem. Theresa explained that they looked at the presence of bare ground on a property, livestock and its vicinity to a creek, manure piles, and the amount of riparian vegetation. Assuming the landowners are interested, Cindy T. offered to help develop grant proposals for one of the two sites with significant concerns. Brian asked if there was an executive summary of the Area Plan and Rules. Theresa said there was and that a copy would be sent to landowners along with the letter from ODA. There was a discussion on the pros and cons of including the larger area or not. Jordan suggested that we could send individual letters and reach out to the six properties of concern that fall outside of the Odell watershed and focus the rest of the SIA effort on just the Odell watershed. In this way, all of the properties of concern in the whole 6<sup>th</sup> field HUC will be addressed, but it won't confuse the messaging around the Odell SIA. The group agreed. Brian asked if there would be a newspaper announcement for the open house. Theresa said ODA has some PR prepared that could be used however we see fit. Brian asked Theresa how the public has perceived working with districts in other areas. Theresa indicated that she has not heard anything negative but mentioned that it wasn't always clear that working with the districts is voluntary. Jordan explained that ODA had sent the district a template letter. She and Kris made edits to the letter to fit our area better. Jordan asked for comments or edits to the letter that she and Kris prepared. The group discussed potential changes that could be made. Jordan asked the group to send her any additional comments on the letter and she will incorporate them.

Jordan reported that a federal judge has halted the implementation of rules that would have required changes to the district's **overtime and employee classification policies**. The board adopted these changes at the last meeting to go into effect as of today (December 1<sup>st</sup>). Jordan explained that the board could decide to move forward with the policy changes or it could leave the previous policy in place. There was a discussion on the pros and cons of changing the policy. Rick moved and Larry seconded to rescind the changes to the employee classification and overtime policies and revisit these policies after the final court ruling. The motion passed unanimously. The district will keep the addition of the whistleblower policy.

**New Business-** Jordan reported that the district needed to adopt the **2017 meeting schedule**. The group decided that the meetings will remain on the first Thursday of every month but the time will be from 4-6 throughout the year. Larry moved and Cindy seconded to adopt the new 2017 meeting schedule. The motion passed unanimously.

Jordan asked the group if anyone had any questions or concerns on the **2015-16 financial review**. The group had none. Jordan mentioned that the auditor had no immediate concerns.

Jordan reported that Bill Parker of Arens and Associates is not going to do the district's **annual audit** moving forward. Jordan spoke with other special districts in the area to find out who was doing their audits and requested bids from three of them. One was not accepting any new clients and the other is in Portland which is inconvenient given that they take out books for several weeks. Anne and Jordan met with Brien Gibson from Onstott, Broehl and Cyphers, a firm out of The Dalles. He provided a bid to the district and it came in lower than expected. For a full audit, which the district will require next year, it will cost about \$6,500. For an audit review, they bid \$3,200-3,900 over the following three years. We had previously been paying about \$4,800 annually. Jordan recommended that we use this firm. The group agreed. Jordan will let Brien know we are interested in working with them next year. Cindy T. asked why the auditors expected their fees to increase over time. Jordan was unsure and will ask.

Jordan explained that there are some updates to the **OWEB insurance policies**. OWEB is changing the insurance required for us to be grant recipients.. Starting in the new year, they will have two new requirements: 1) general insurance, which sets minimum coverage amounts required of all OWEB grantees and 2) specialized insurance, which may be required depending on the project type and the risks associated with it. OWEB is having a webinar to provide OWEB grantees with more information. Jordan will sit in on the webinar and report back. Jordan has talked with our insurance agent and our policy already meets the general insurance requirements. Our policy meets some of the specialized insurance requirements, but it will depend largely on the project. She expects that the district will simply need to make sure that any contractors we use carry the necessary insurance. Projects that are done in-house, may require us to expand our policy. Jordan passed around a handout on OWEB's new insurance requirements. Rick asked if a contractor can have performance bonds in lieu of insurance coverage. Jordan was not sure, but will ask OWEB. After the webinar, Jordan will discuss any necessary changes to our policy with our insurance agent and report back to the board at the January meeting. Our policy is up for renewal in the new year.

Cindy T. explained that she would like to apply for a **NFWF grant** to potentially fund the water bank feasibility study. It will be the same proposal that has already been submitted to OWEB, but this application will be for a different pool of OWEB money being administered by NFWF. Cindy T. explained how OWEB organizes the funding sources. She explained that OWEB will review both proposals she has submitted and will determine the best source of funding. It is worth applying for both grants. Larry moved and Rick seconded to apply for the NFWF grant. The motion passed unanimously.

**Informational Reports – Carly** reported that she has been busy with EQIP applications that were due in the middle of the month. There were two air quality, one organic, and 9 MFID irrigation upgrade applications. She took the new Wasco County DC to Portland to meet people housed in that office and attended a meeting in Redmond. She also has been working with Soil Conservationist Clinton Whitten at the Parkdale office.

**Kris** reported that she has been busy planning for spring. She has been working on task lists for plant sale, garlic mustard, and sampling events. She has been working on figuring out some plans for the IWM workshops happening this spring, as well as the Odell SIA. She has done some work on plant sale and OWEB small grants this month. Kris also spent some time submitting forms for the Title II funding for 2017 garlic mustard work.

**Megan** has been working on clean-up and data entry from the field season. She did some carcass placement work with the CTWS and worked on the small grants.

**Cindy T.** reported that she sent out the HRWG self-evaluation survey. She edited the original survey for clarity and to be more relevant for the HRWG. The HRWG meeting will be held on December 13<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at Divots. Cindy reported that she went to Clackamas for the Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Plan meeting. She presented on the Water Conservation Strategy.

**Jordan** reported that she has been working on the items mentioned previously in the meeting. She has been asked to help evaluate the OWEB outreach application and agreed to participate. This would involve two in-person meetings, only one of which she will make, and one phone meeting. She participated in the November OACD conference call. Jordan felt it was worthwhile; she learned about upcoming legislative issues and budget projections. A directors training, hosted by ODA, will be held in The Dalles on January 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Directors' reports –Cindy** had nothing to report.

**Rick** reported that he attended a meeting with the Wasco County collaborative group event. He thought it was a good meeting and field trip with good speakers.

**Larry** reported that he attended the SIA meeting earlier in the week and complimented staff on the annual report.

**Chuck** reported that he participated in the Powerdale Lands Advisory Committee meeting. Kate Conley presented on the accomplishments, goals, and future plans for the area.

**Brian** reported that he attended the annual OWRC conference in Hood River in the last week of November. There was a lot of talk of budget cuts and changes to funding. He attended a presentation on branding by a Central Oregon irrigation district. EFID will delay the Highline Canal Piping project until they can work out easement agreements with landowners. Brian also reported that OWRD didn't award all of the \$14 million for the WaterSMART grants. There are still some available funds left for the spring application window.

**Permits** – Jordan submitted two comment letters concerning proposed partitions along the East Fork Hood River in the upper valley. She thanked the board for their feedback. There were no additional permits of note.

**Other** – The next meeting will be the Annual Meeting held at 4 p.m. on Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at the OSU Extension office meeting room.

**Summary of Actions Taken:**

- ✓ Consent agenda moved, seconded and approved.
- ✓ Moved, seconded and approved to rescind the changes to the new employee classification and overtime policies and revisit them after the final court ruling.
- ✓ Moved, seconded and approved to adopt the new 2017 meeting schedule.
- ✓ Moved, seconded and approved to apply for the NFWF grant for the water bank feasibility study.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Schaedel, Conservation Technician

Approved at the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting of the Hood River SWCD.

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John Joyer, Secretary